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is profound. Enamel smooth. The species may be called *Anchisodon tubifer.*—*E. D. Cope.*

A NEW GENUS OF ICHTHYOPTERYGIA.—Prof. Marsh has recently described a genus which he does not distinguish from *Ichthyosaurus* excepting by the entire absence of teeth, and even of a dental groove. He names the genus *Sauranodon.* The only known species *S. natans* is from the marine Jurassic of the Rocky mountains, and is about nine feet in length. Prof. Marsh proposes to regard *Sauranodon* as the type of a new order, but the only reason he assigns for this course, the absence of teeth, is insufficient.

MUSCHELKALK FOSSILS IN IDAHO.—In the last number of the *Bulletin* of the Hayden Survey, Dr. A. C. Peale describes certain mesozoic strata of South-eastern Idaho, which contain both Jurassic and Triassic invertebrate fossils. The lowest of these contains Cephalopods described by Dr. White, which Mr. Hyatt regards as more nearly allied to the forms of the Muschelkalk, although they are associated with some Jurassic species, one of which is also doubtfully identified from the top of the section.

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.[1]

THE DUTCH ARCTIC EXPEDITION. — In the NATURALIST for August, 1878, mention was made of the sailing of the small schooner *Willem Barentz* from Ijmuiden, on the 5th of May, 1873, for the Arctic seas. This preliminary voyage was chiefly undertaken to give experience in ice navigation to officers and men, as well as to make scientific observations in the Barentz sea, between Spitzbergen and Novaya Zemlya, and is expected to be followed by a second and more important expedition. For an account of the experiences of this small company of fourteen souls, we are indebted chiefly to Mr. Clements R. Markham.[2]

After calling at the Norwegian port of Bergen, they set sail on the 18th of May for Jan Mayen, arriving in sight of this remote volcanic island on a fine day, June 9th. The view, so rarely enjoyed in this region of continual fog, was impressive. The island is thirty miles long and nine broad, and at the north end rises the remarkable volcanic peak, Beerenberg, 6300 feet in height, covered with snow almost to the water's edge, and presenting a most imposing appearance, the high jagged summits of the lower hills, from which smoke was slowly rising, appearing quite dwarfed in comparison.[3]

A storm arising prevented their landing, and on the 12th they reached the edge of the west ice, and keeping along the line of this ice they reached the north-western end of Spitzbergen on the 19th. "Spitzbergen has justly earned its name, for one sees nothing but sharp-pointed rocks showing amongst the colossal glaciers, while the sun, throwing a red glow, brings the whiteness of the snow into startling contrast with the deep shadows." On the 27th they reached their furthest northern point in 80° 18′ N., off Verlegen Hoek. After stopping at Amsterdam island to erect a memorial slab of granite in the midst of the graves of Dutch whalers who died there in 1633–5, and touching at Bear island they arrived at Vardö, in Norway, on the 22d of July, and then commenced the reconnaisance of the sea of Barentz, sailing north along the 45th meridian. Ice was again met on the 1st of August at 77° 10′ N., and after proceeding westward and attaining a point (lat. 77° 44′ N., long. 35° 30′ E.) eighty miles from Wyche island, they were driven to the south by heavy gales. To the eastward of longitude 38° the ice was found to be thin, level and rotten, while to the westward there were heavy floes of immense thickness with hummocks thirty feet high. In the beginning of August they appeared to be on the boundary line where the warm and cold currents meet. Up to that time they found that the temperature of the sea decreased with its depth; but here they met with cold and warm currents flowing one over the other. The explorers next proceeded to Novaya Zemlya, and proceeding northwards along the coast to Cape Nassau, steered to the north-west and found the ice-field on September 7th in 78° 17′ and 55° 14′ E. From here the *Willem Barentz* made her way to Hammerfest, and this successful trip was finally ended at Amsterdam on the 13th of October. Experience of the ice movements between Spitzbergen and Novaya Zemlya had been acquired, a full hourly series of meteorological observations had been taken as well as deep sea soundings and magnetic observations and very valuable collections in natural history made. Notwithstanding almost constant fogs an excellent series of photographs was completed.

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[1] Edited by ELLIS H. YARNALL, Philadelphia.

[2] *Proceedings Royal Geographical Society*, January, 1879.

[3] See *Illustrated London News* for October 26, 1878, for view of Jan Mayen from photograph taken on board of the *Willem Barentz.* Also number for January 25, 1879.

THE NORWEGIAN NORTH ATLANTIC EXPEDITION.—During the past three summers a Norwegian expedition under the charge of Dr. Mohn, Dr. Sars and other scientific men has been exploring the sea between Norway, the Ferroe islands, Iceland and Spitzbergen. Being well supplied with the most recent inventions for dredging, sounding, obtaining sea temperatures, etc., the scientific results are stated to be very satisfactory. Their investigations have now been concluded. The three summers have yielded in all 375 sounding stations, 113 temperature series, 44 dredgings and 42 trawlings. It was ascertained that during June and July the minimum temperature of the water off the coast of Norway is neither at the bottom nor at the surface, but at some intermediate strata of considerable depth. The explanation offered is that in winter the cold water of the surface descends on account of its increased weight, until it reaches a stratum where the superincumbent water causes by pressure an equal density. In the warm months the surface water becoming heated has no tendency to sink. The warm Atlantic current was traced to the north of the eightieth degree of latitude along the west coast of Spitzbergen.

GEOGRAPHICAL NEWS.—The parties under Lieut. G. M. Wheeler, Corps of Engineers, continued their work during the season of 1878, in California, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, New Mexico, Utah and Washington Territory, and surveyed approximatively 35,000 square miles, commencing July 1st and ending December 25th. Lieut. Wheeler was with party No. 1, California section, in the region north of a line joining Fort Klamath, Oregon, and Camp Bidwell, California, northward to the Columbia river. Prof. Stevenson, geologist, and his assistant, Mr. Russell, investigated the coal fields of Colorado and eastern New Mexico, and Mr. Henshaw continued to increase his zoölogical collections in California and Oregon.

Recent geographical publications in Germany include: Aus Mexico, Reiseskizzen aus der Jahren 1874 und 1875, von Dr. Fr. Ratzel; Reise durch den Stillen Ocean, von Max Buchner; Die Sahara, oder von Oase zu Oase, Bilder aus den Natur und Volksleben in der grossen afrikanischen Wüste, von Dr. Josef Chavanne; Die Literatur über die Polar Regionen der Erde, von Dr. Josef Chavanne; Abriss der praktischen Astronomie, vorzüglich in ihrer Anwendung auf geographische Ortsbestimmung, von Dr. A. Sawitsch nach der zweiten russischen Original Ausgabe; Ethiopien-Studien über West-Afrika, von Dr. W. Hübbe-Schleiden, and, Beiträge zur physischer Geographie der Mittelmeerländer besonders Siciliens, von Theobald Fischer.

Dr. Edwin R. Heath, of Wisconsin, sailed from New York November 18, 1878, for Para. He expects to explore the Beni and Madre di Dios rivers of Brazil. He has already spent some years in South America and is well prepared for the difficult work he has undertaken.

The newly colonized "northern territory" of South Australia is not the desert it was recently thought to be. The appearance of the natives is very gaunt and peculiar, their black faces being painted across with bands of white, so that they have a death's-head like appearance. It is stated that they cut off a joint from the finger of a mother for every child of hers that dies. As they also kill their weakly or delicate children, this practice is likely often to be of considerable inconvenience.—London *Times*.

The Russian government survey for a railway between Orenburg and Tashkend is finished and shows that it is quite possible to carry the line through the desert of Kara-Kum. An exploration will be made in 1879 towards Samarcand and in the direction of Cabul and Peshawur. Col. Prejevalsky will shortly set out on his new exploring expedition to Kuldja, Thibet and the Himalayas.

The last supplement to *Petermann's Mittheilungen* is devoted to an elaborate monograph by Dr. G. A. Credner, of Halle University, upon deltas. The paper is divided into two sections. In the first he treats of the limits of deltas, their character, and formation of their surface, their size, power, material, rate and results of growth, their age, number and geographical distribution and classification. In the second he treats of the origin and causes of the formation of deltas, and the geological problem thus presented. Maps showing the various deltas and illustrating the upheaval and subsidence of land are also given.

The British Arctic exploring ship *Alert* has again been put into commission under her old captain, Sir George Nares, for surveying service in Magellan's straits and the south Pacific. The work in Magellan's straits is expected to occupy from one to two years. The *Alert* will then proceed to make isolated but important surveys in the neighborhood of the Society, Friendly and Fiji islands and of shoals and reefs between the Fijis and New Zealand, and finally on the south-western and north-western coasts of Australia.

Major Herbert Wood and other writers have heretofore confidently asserted that the ancient river Oxus (now the Amu Darya) has within historic times emptied into the Caspian sea, and that its ancient channel can still be traced. The recent breaking down of a dam at Fort Bend on the Amu, which has caused a deviation of its waters in the direction of this old bed, has originated the report mentioned in the London *Times* that the river was about to resume its former course. Prof. Kiepert now writes to the Berlin *National Zeitung* to deny this report. He asserts that the old bed of the Oxus belongs to geology and not to history and that the project of completely restoring the ancient water-course and opening a new water way from Moscow to the heart of Asia is one which would overtask the resources of the richest state.

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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— In December, 1878, Dr. Gustav Leonhard, of Heidelberg, died, leaving the editorial management of the Jahrbuch für Mineralogie, so long and favorably know in America, in the hands of Dr. Hans Bruno Geinitz, of Dresden. Now, after sixteen years association with Dr. Leonhard, Dr. Geinitz retires from the editorship. The dissolution of this distinguished partnership will create a new feature in geological literature, and we can only wish Dr. Geinitz the same success in the cultivation of his favorite science in the future that he has had in the past.